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Statement submitted by Mothers Pride and Development Initiative, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Reducing Gender Inequality and Enhancing Women Empowerment for Development in Nigeria around the world

Without mixing words, women's participation in development initiatives has not been encouraging and it does not always guarantee their empowerment, health and welfare in a male dominated society like Nigeria.

In Nigeria, it is observed that womanhood is reduced to a mere infidel and a second-class citizen; hence, there is the commonality of general belief system that the best place for women is in the kitchen. This trend has brought about tremendous misrepresentation of women right at the level of the family down to the circular society.

A few decades back, women in African politics were not much more than pretty faces, as they were judged by their looks and not by what they had to say. But things have changed nowadays. African women that gained political power definitely know what to do with it. Nigerian women persevered and have got to the point where they can be on the same political level as men. Most of male leaders are attributed to different corruption and malpractices, Nevertheless, women in politics are more than a pretty face. There are examples of women making strides in politics and in financial institutions and advancing the rights of women and youth. The #BRINGBACKOURGIRLS# campaign is another example where women have been influential. Women have also been influential and effective in regaining the nobility and integrity of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control in Nigeria by eradicating counterfeit drugs and unsafe foods in Nigeria.

Basically, gender inequality is the development process where resources are distributed between male and female segment of the population in such manner that one is favoured at the expense of the other. Consequently, this results to income inequality within the society. The income inequality leads to other inequalities in the economy especially in the area of human capital development (Education and Health).

In Nigeria, resources are distributed unequally against the female gender due to societal norms and stereotypes, for example gender inequality within the overall society and across all sector show the wide disparities between women and men which in turn contributes to uneven development and feminization of poverty. Below are some of the factors that indicate inequalities in Nigeria:

- On Poverty level; 70 per cent of people with poverty, women are 65 per cent
- In participation in workforce; 76 per cent of Federal civil services workers are men while women are 24 per cent.
- Income and purchasing power; research have it that men have USD 1,495 while the women have USD 614.
- In participation in decision making process; 94.5 per cent men and 5.5 per cent are women in the National Assembly 469 men and just 26 are women. This is quite unfair.

After critical look in the inclusive systematic evaluation for gender equality, environments and marginalized voices of the women cum recommendations of the expert group meeting on building sustainable and resilient societies through the gender responsive implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, it is moral and ethical imperative. Plan to achieve a just and sustainable future cannot ignore the rights, dignity and capability of half the world's population. To be effective, policy actions for sustainability must redress the disproportionate impacts on women

and girls of economic, social and environmental shocks, pain and stress. Women has the potential to improve resource productivity, enhance ecosystem conversion and sustainable use of natural resources, and create more sustainable low carbon food, energy, water and health systems. Failure to capitalize on the aforementioned would be a missed opportunity.

At Mothers Pride and Development Initiative, we believe in seeking the peace of the stomach as seeking the peace of the nation, we give life a meaning by putting smiles on the faces of our women, widows and the youths through our quarterly empowerment programs, free skill acquisition and adult literacy services, advocate and agitate for the rights of women and widows entitlements. We also engage our women in social economy activities by grouping them into different cooperative society to encourage their prudence habit and serve as evaluation measure for their growths. We desire to enhance rapid development in our society and to give a meaningful support to the widows. "Empowering a woman, is developing the nation." A better Nigeria is a great Africa, and it will make a better global habitat for all.

Resolutions taken are that various programs undertaken by the government in Nigeria, Africa and the world should be scale up to develop the women. Stakeholders should monitor the implementation of reforms in that direction to ensure equitable distribution of resources and records. That, all political stakeholders at all level should make it a norm of larger portion of women participation in leadership roles like 40 per cent involvement across all sector. Adequate advocacy campaign and sensitization on rights of women both in rural and urban areas. Give all women fair hearing in all issues at all level regardless of tribe, traditional and religious differences.